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THOMAS G. BRUTON  
CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT

September 15, 2017  
1807 Nicole Lane  
Lithonia, GA 30058

Clerk of the Court  
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois  
219 South Dearborn Street  
Chicago, IL 60604

Case No. 1:13-cv-09116

Dear Clerk of Court:

My name is Annita Jeffery, MD, and I am writing to you regarding the settlement proposed for the lawsuit In re National Collegiate Athletic Association Student-Athlete Concussion Injury Litigation. While I agree with the premise of the litigation, I believe that the proposed settlement is inadequate to address the potential sequelae of a concussion. I would like to offer a little of my story as an example.

I was a student-athlete in Track and Field at Georgia Institute of Technology from 1998 to 2001. My primary event was the 100 M hurdles. I know Track and Field is not the event most associated with concussions, but I did experience a concussion as the result of an accidental fall during a routine practice. I do fully believe that this was an accident and do not fault the staff in any way for the event itself. I also believe that the aftermath was handled in a negligent matter.

At the time, I was evaluated by a trainer, however, I was not advised that I had even suffered a concussion. Having had no experience with concussions and almost no medical training at that point, I cannot say that it even crossed my mind that I had in fact had a concussion and that there were potential serious implications associated with this event. I did subsequently have imaging—I believe it was a CT scan of the head—which was negative, and I did later see a Neurologist for an initial evaluation and follow up. But 3 days later, I was back on the track competing, and tried not to think about it anymore.

During my second year of medical school, I began to suffer severe depression. My advisors and my treating physicians could not figure out why I would suddenly experience depressive symptoms and have such a drastic change in mood, because the first year of professional school is considered by, nearly everyone, to be the most difficult year. I was also at a loss as to how to explain this; there had been no major events in my life, nothing really out of the ordinary.

Over time, I had also begun to have headaches with increasing frequency. I began to experience migraines that were severe and often debilitating. The migraines came with such frequency that I had to take suppressive beta blockers for a number of years.

Sometimes they would last for days at a time. These new illnesses were affecting all aspects of my life adversely—my education, my social life, everything.

I ultimately had to repeat that year of medical school, resulting in an even larger debt burden, not to mention the negative affect this had on my career later on and even my self-confidence. I continued to struggle with depression throughout the remainder of my medical school and residency careers. I continue to deal with it to this day.

I offer this as a glimpse into what I have had to deal with. What may on the surface initially appear to be documentation of my failings as a student, take on a different color when in the setting of a head injury. I was a high achieving student and a high achieving athlete and the only identifiable major event was this seemingly minor concussion.

With what we know about concussions, and what we are still learning, I urge the court to consider stronger conditions to any settlement reached. Simple monitoring and the service reward for class representatives is woefully inadequate. There must be better provision for aftercare, to include doctors visits or medications. This has cost me many specialist visits, medications of various cost and countless hours of therapy at significant cost. And while I am fortunate to have the means to afford this, I know that there are others who cannot. There are those who are forced by circumstances to take less than optimal treatment, or none at all, and as such, are not able to live their lives as fully as they would like. I feel it necessary that I speak up for them.

Thank you for taking time to read my letter and consider my concerns.

Sincerely,

  
Annita N. Jeffery, MD  
216.650.5793